Jovis, octavo die Novembris,
1666.

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THat *the Thanks of this Houſe be returned to Doctor* Perrinchief; *and Doctor* Sandcroft, *Dean of St.* Pauls; *for the Sermons by them Preached Yeſterday before this Houſe; and that they be deſired to Print their Sermons: And Mr.* Crouch *is to return the Thanks of the Houſe to Doctor* Perrinchief; *and Sir* John Berkenhead *to Dr.* Sandcroft; *with the deſire of the Houſe to each of them to Print their Sermons.*

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A

SERMON

Preached before the

Honourable Houſe

OF

COMMONS,

At St. *Margarets Weſtminſter, Nov.* 7

Being the Faſt-day appointed for the Plague of Peſtilence.

By *Richard Perrinchief*, D. D.

Publiſhed by Order of the ſaid Houſe.

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A

SERMON

Preached before the

Honourable

Lev. 26. 18.

And if you will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then will I puniſh you ſeven times more for your ſins.

ALthough God hath laid Obligations enough upon the Souls of men to ſerve him; though there is ſuch an evident wiſdom in his Counſels, ſuch a beauty of Holineſs ſhines in his Law, as are ſufficient to raviſh our *Reaſon* to a compliance: Yet men ſeldom or never are prevailed upon without ſomething that concerns the *Senſe*. For the Outward man muſt be invited by ſomewhat that will allure the carnal affections, or terrified by what repreſents the loſs of their ſatisfaction. Therefore God was pleaſed ſo far to ſtoop to the infirmities

of mankind, that when he gave his *Law*,
Rom. 7. 12. which in it ſelf is *holy*, *juſt*, and *good*, he added to his Precepts thoſe Promiſes and Threats, which ſhould aſſure the more ſenſual part, that there are all juſt and ſolid comforts in Obedience, and that to Diſobey ſhall be neither ſafe nor pleaſant. The *Goſpel* alſo, though it be a more plain and open inſtitution for the ſpirits of men, and a direction for the life
1 Tim. 4. 8. *to come*, yet invites *Godlineſs* with the *promiſes of this life*; and hath the ſanction of *Indignation, and wrath, tribulation, and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil.*
Rom. 2. 8, 9.

More particularly in this *Chapter* are propoſed thoſe *Bleſſings* which ſhall make the *ſincere in heart* rejoyce, and crown thoſe heads that are wiſe with the fear of God: and then afterwards, from *ver.* 14. to the end of *ver.* 17. he denounces the ſeveral effects of his *Anger* which ſhall weary and grieve the ungodly, and conſume *the ſinner*.

But then, his infinite Wiſdome foreſeeing the *variety of events* which ſhould be from his Judgments, and that though

ſome

ſome *in their affliction ſhould ſeek God early*, yet others *would not regard when his hand was lifted up*, nor *turn to him that ſmote them*; doth therefore in this Text declare how diſmall ſhall be the iſſue of ſuch a ſtupidity: *And if ye will not*, &c. *then will I puniſh you ſeven times more for your ſins.* Hoſ. 5. 15. Iſa. 26. 11. Chap. 9. 13.

The Text conſiſts of 1. A Suppoſition, *And if you will not for all this hearken unto me*: 2. A Conſequence, *Then will I puniſh you ſeven times more for your ſins.*

In the Suppoſition you may obſerve, *Firſt*, The Perſons concerned; *Ye*, who have already been puniſhed, that have had terrours appointed over you, and againſt whom God hath ſet his face. *Secondly*, What is ſuppoſed of theſe Perſons; That *they will not hearken*, not repent, and turn to him in obedience, but continue ſtill in the perverſneſs of their waies. *Thirdly*, The aggravation of this perverſneſs; That it was in contempt of all thoſe diſcoveries of God's Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, which he doth manifeſt in his Judgments: *For all this.*

In the Conſequence are, *Firſt*, The Conſequent, Puniſhment; *I will Puniſh. Secondly*, The Neceſſity or Certainty of the Conſequence, *I Will puniſh. Thirdly*, The Terrour or Meaſure of it; *Seven times more. Fourthly*, The Juſtice and Equity of it; *For your ſins.* The conſideration of theſe parts, with a reflection on them how far they concern us, will be proper to the Occaſion of our preſent meeting.

I. The Suppoſition: *That a people on whom the Judgments of God have paſſed may yet not hearken to him that ſmote them, nor ſeek the Lord of Hoſts by repentance.* This may well be ſuppoſed, becauſe it is *poſſible.* For all the Providences of God, how apt ſoever they are in their own nature to affect the ſpirits, and awaken the conſciences of men, yet being intended by God only as motives, perſwaſives, and convictions, and not deſigned as inſtruments of violence to force the Soul, leave them ſtill in the natural liberty of their wills. His *Mercies* indeed are as *cords of love*, to elicite and draw forth our affections; to raiſe

longing

longing and panting paſſions for the enjoyment of that fountain from whence flow ſuch pleaſant ſtreams: Yet they are but as *the bands of man*, work in ſuch a manner as is fit for a reaſonable Soul; not leading it in chains, not dragging it as a ſlave. Therefore how much ſoever they may raviſh a pious man, yet they may be deſpiſed by him who is proud to do wickedly.

So likewiſe the *Judgments* of God, though they may conſume all thoſe things about us for which we ſin, cut off the darlings of our luſts, and the vile prices of our damnation, ſhew us what bitterneſs is in the end of tranſgreſſion; yet they may leave the *heart* of man *unwounded*, without the leaſt impreſſion of a true and penitent ſorrow. And if the heart of man be yet left free to it ſelf, there may flow from it the iſſues of death, *Evil thoughts, murthers, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe-witneſs, and blaſphemies*, and all thoſe other pollutions which *defile a man.* So that all the terrours of Judgments, the fall of Heaven, the ſhakings of the Earth, the ruines Mat. 15. 19.

ruines of the diſſolved world, may leave the ſinner where they found him; amazed, perchance, and terrified, yet ſtill infamous, with an *inclination* to all his abominations, which waits for the next opportunity of his ſhame.

But it were well for mankind if this ſuppoſition were grounded only upon a *poſſibility*, that it were only a *ſpeculation*, and never practicable; for we have too many ſad Hiſtories, and too frequent Inſtances of others, beſides our ſelves, whom the Judgments of God have not altered. The Deluge of waters in the time of *Noah* was the moſt univerſal and terrible Judgment that God ever brought upon mankind; yet did it not cleanſe all that out-lived it, and were ſaved from it: for *Cham*, who had been one of the witneſſes how ſoon the glory of this world vaniſhes, how all the acquiſitions of bloud and violence were ſwept away by the *opening of the windows of Heaven*, how all the frolick joyes at Marrying and giving in Marriage, all the luſts which by eating and drinking were nouriſhed to a prodigy,

conclu-

concluded with ſhrieks and cries at the *breaking up of the great Deep*; he who beheld how fruitleſs and vain were all the labours of men to ſecure themſelves from indignation, and eſcape the wrath of an incenſed God, being forced at laſt to ſubmit to the execution, and end their daies with horrour and lamentation; he who had an experience that there was no ſafety but in *righteouſneſs*, that it alone had made an Ark for a Sanctuary to his Father and his Family: yet even this man entred upon the *new* world with all the ſins of the *old*, and revived thoſe impieties and injuſtices for which God before had cut men off from the face of the earth. The *Iſraelites* were as it were pulled up by the roots from the Land of their Fathers, carried in chains to *Babylon*, and there made to ſerve ſo heavie a ſervice, as rendred the *Egyptian* bondage inconſiderable, and was imbittered with the various reproaches of their God: Yet this very people, when they were delivered in ſo miraculous a manner, that they could ſcarce believe their own happineſs, and

Gen. 7. 1.

Jer. 23. 7, 8.

doubted

doubted their freedom to be *but a day-*
Psal. 126. 1. *dream*, and their ſafety too great for a reality; yet ſoon declared by their practices, that they had left nothing but their chains at *Babylon*, and came home loaded with their old crimes of Violence, Oppreſſion, and Uncleanneſs, for which God before *had made their Land to mourn*. It is needleſs to recite more inſtances; what hath been already done, may be done again. It deſerves our conſideration to enquire into thoſe dreadful *cauſes* that bring this *poſſibility* to an *actual exiſtence*; that render ineffectual to the reforming of our lives the Judgments of God, either as *threatned*, or *executed*.

1. The bare *threatning* of Judgments is one of thoſe methods the Divine wiſdom thinks fit to uſe to *draw men off from their ſins*, to warn before he ſtrikes, and to brandiſh his Sword over our heads before he wounds them, that if by this means men would be brought to repent of the evil of their doings, he would repent of the evil he had ſpoken againſt them. This was he pleaſed

to

to do in the *Old Teſtament* very particularly: He ſent his Servants the Prophets to ſuch and ſuch a *Nation* or *People*, that they ſhould deal clearly, and plainly charge them with their *ſins*, denounce *Judgments* in proportion to them, and in particular determine the limits of the *time* wherein they ſhould come to paſs; as, *within three years, as years of an hireling*, within *forty daies*. And yet many of theſe were not regarded, ſo that the threatnings being deſpiſed, the execution took place on them. Iſa. 16. 14. Jon. 3. 4.

In the times of the *New Teſtament*, though God is not ſo particular, yet is he as *poſitive*. For the general declarations of *his wrath againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs*, atteſted unto by ſo many ſeveral *inſtances* of ſuch that have faln under this wrath, leave every man to conclude God's anger againſt his own particular ſins, as certainly as if a Prophet had been ſent on purpoſe unto him. For it is not the *appearance* of a Prophet, nor his particular *application*, that makes the Rom. 1 18.

threatnings of God *effectual*; because then all would have been prevailed upon to repentance to whom the Prophets did addreſs themſelves, which it is plain they were not. Or more certain; for no one particular Prophet can poſſibly have ſo many evidences of his being ſent by God: as there are of the whole *Scripture*, of *Jeſus* himſelf, and *all the Prophets* which ſpake by his Spirit. So that whoſoever is not moved at all by theſe *threatnings* of God in his *Word*, though general, the ſame perſon would alſo deſpiſe a Prophet, had he no other buſineſs from Heaven but to forewarn him what ſhould be the iſſue of his ſins.

Beſides, theſe general denunciations may by prudent obſervation be fixed to particular *Times*, and *Perſons*. Our Saviour told the Jews, it was as poſſible for them *to know the ſigns of the times*, that is, *the approach of Judgments*, as to tell what weather the face of the skie will wear the next day. For there are ſome previous *Circumſtances* in the ſtate of affairs, in the lives and converſations of men, by which

Mat. 16. 3. Luk. 12. 56.

wiſe

wiſe perſons may gather, Publick *calamities* and *ruines* are hard at hand; ſuch as are, the general *debaucheries* of mens manners, the *impudence* of ſins, *obſtinacie* in the profecution of our luſts, *contempt* of the worſhip of God, either *cheriſhing*, or *chaſtiſing* us. By theſe, and the like, the approaches of common diſtreſs, and troubles are as conſpicuous, as a following ſtorm or tempeſt is in the gathering together of the blacker clouds. When *Amaziah* the King of *Judah* was ſo ſtrangely infatuated as to forſake the God who had given him a wonderful *victory*, and to worſhip thoſe of his defeated enemies, *which could not deliver their own people out of his hand*, and was ſo obſtinate in his follie as to terrifie the *reproving* Prophet; the Prophet concludes from thence that his *deſtruction* was nigh, for it is ſaid, that *he forbare, and ſaid, I know that God hath determined to deſtroy thee, becauſe thou haſt done this, and haſt not hearkened unto my counſel.* Nor are ſuch Concluſions to be drawn from mens practiſes by *Prophets* only: *Machiavel*

2 Chro. 25. 14,15,16.

(who was conceived to be no great admirer of God's waies of Providence, yet being true to his own obſervations) ſets this down as a rule of *Augurie* of the ſtate of Nations, *We cannot have a greater ſign of the ruine of a people than to ſee the Worſhip of God deſpiſed.* Thus many men prudentially comparing together the *Word* of God with his moſt uſual *Providences*, and applying them to the *times* and *lives* of men, have been able to foreſee and declare thoſe future *events*, which have as certainly *come to paſs* as if a preſent Inſpiration had enabled them to prophecie. So that the *threatnings* of God, how *general* ſoever they are, may yet be brought home to the hearts and conſciences of *particular* perſons, to move them to a ſerious repentance, without the expectation of *Prodigies*, or ſome portentuous *Signs* from Heaven, which are dark and ambiguous in their event. But if theſe prove ineffectual to this great end, the fault is not to be imputed to any *defect* in the Divine *goodneſs*, as having waved his former methods

Diſc. l. 1. c. 12. *Niſſuno maggiore indizio ſi puote havere dalla rouina d'una provincia, che vedere diſpregiato il culto divino.*

methods of long-ſuffering and patience, and intending to ſurprize us, but to the various and ſtrong *corruptions* of men, which truly are thoſe hardening cauſes, that make them not hearken unto God. And ſuch are theſe:

1. Some harden themſelves by *Infidelity*, and that *wiſdom of the World* which is now in Vogue; *Not to believe any thing but what brings a demonſtration to our reaſon, or ſatisfies our ſenſe to an aſſent*: therefore becauſe things future are not to be demonſtrated, nor can our ſenſes be certain of that which is not yet in being, they ſcoff at the *Oracles* of God, and make their ſport at the *affirmations* of Heaven. So that it is unlikely they will be forced from the *pleaſure* of their *luſts*, by that which is the *object* of their *ſcorn*. Thus *Lot's Sons-in-Law* diſcrediting the news he brought them, that *the Lord will deſtroy this City*, (for *he ſeemed to them as one that mocked*;) they continued in *Sodom*, and the ſins of it, till fire from Heaven did, too late, convince them of Gen. 19. 14.

the

the truth of his kind intelligence. *Infidelity* hatches our luſts, as *Cockatrice-Eggs*, till they become flying *Serpents*. Look about you, and obſerve how *impudent* they are in their ſins, how *impenitent* in their lives, how *regardleſs* of the publick miſeries, who mock at Religion, and draw matter of rallery from the Scriptures; who ſcoff at *paſt Prophecies* as antiquated Stories, tales that never had accompliſhments; and endeavour to impoſe upon the ſecurer world a *diſ-eſteem* of all the *threats* of God, as the *troubleſome dreams* of ſome hungry melancholy Prieſts, who divine for a reward. Theſe ſcoffs you know make up a great part of the vain diſcourſe of many in our Age; whoſe *Infidelity* ariſes not from a want of evidence in the *truths* of God, for there are more *degrees* of *probability* in all his threatnings, than there are of *deſirableneſs* in the things for which they ſin: but becauſe they are ſo far in love with their luſts, that, like *importunate* Adulterers, they quarrel, and duel all thoſe who would perſwade or divorce them from their

unlawful

unlawful embraces; so that Infidelity, and Lust, do mutually spawn, and nourish each the other.

2. Others are not wrought upon by the *denunciation* of Judgments through *a too fond Credulity, a believing too much.* For howsoever they are perswaded, that *what God hath said shall certainly come to pass*; yet, cheating themselves into an Imagination, that they are *his choisest Servants, his deareſt Children*, they are confident he intends nothing but *smiles* and *embraces* for them, and that the *anger* which he threatens is to fall to the lot of others. And this perswasion arises from some peculiar *opinion*, or *practice* of theirs in Religion, different from the rest of mankind; on which while they put too high a value, they believe it commends them so to the *Love* of God, that though they do those things for which *the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience*, yet by some *vain words* they are cheated to think, that they are *chosen* for his *Jacob*, and separated to be his *Israel*, and that *God sees no Iniquity* in them: and when Eph. 5. 6.

they

they believe God ſo kind to them, they will not be leſs kind to themſelves. And it is no wonder if ſuch perſons are not *changed* by the threatnings of God, ſince they preſume there is nothing in them can *provoke* his anger. Thus when the Prophets told the *Jews* of thoſe ſeveral *deſtructions* that ſhould fall upon them, how *Plagues* ſhould conſume them from the earth, and yet a wrath purſue them beyond the Grave, they *truſted in lying words*, they believed without any ground, ſaying, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*,&c. *viz.* that the Lord *dwelling* among them as in his *Holy place*, and they being *a people nigh* unto him, none of thoſe things ſhould happen unto them, ſo that inſtead of hearkening to God by repentance, they more provoked God by injuries to thoſe his ſervants.

Jer. 7. 4.

3. Some render all the threatnings of God fruitleſs, through their *ſhortneſs of diſcourſe*, whereby they fool themſelves into a *preſuming* upon his mercy: they *commit* the Attributes of God, and to all declarations of his future juſtice

juſtice they oppoſe, that *God is Gracious and Merciful, plenteous in Goodneſs, that he is not extreme to mark what is done amiſs*, that ſatisfied with his own Rectitude he deſcends not to mark our follies: and, as he is the *moſt perfect* Being, whoſe glory is Goodneſs, that is, an incomprehenſible *Inclination to do good to his Creatures*; anger and fury is not his: neither can ſo Gracious a God appoint eternal torments for puniſhments of finite creatures, or temporary tranſgreſſions: thus they baffle his *Veracity* with his *Clemency*. Or elſe they make his *Long-ſuffering* to wear out the ſenſe of his *Juſtice*: as thoſe Scoffers, *who walking after their own luſts, ſaid, Where is the promiſe of his Coming? For ſince the Fathers fell aſleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation.* Such wilful ignorance as this made the unfaithful *Steward* to argue from *his Lord's delaying to come*, that either he would not call him to an account; or that he might have leaſure enough *to beat the men-ſervants, and the maidens, and to eat and drink with the*

2 Pet. 3. 3, 4.

Luk. 12. 45.

drunken. How far ſuch fooliſh Colle-ctions as theſe will prevail to harden mens hearts, the Wiſe-man tells us, Eccl. 8. 11. *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed, there-fore the hearts of men are fully ſet in them to do evil.*

Theſe are the moſt common and or-dinary waies which harden the hearts of men againſt all the ſeverity of Gods *threatnings*, and render *them* as ineffectual to a change of life, as if they were deemed but *cauſeleſs curſes* that never come, as the paſſionate *Rants* of weaker perſons, who would terrifie where they cannot perſwade, and frighten thoſe whom they cannot force. Theſe keep the ſinner more cloſe to his ſinful enjoyments; ſuggeſt unto him a more than vulgar *wiſdom* not to be ſhaken as a fool with words, and a miſtaken *courage*, which is but obſtinacy; not to be *Hector'd* out of his carnal ſatisfactions. And as the Corruptions of men, or their common Enemy, hath found out theſe arts to de-lude God's goodneſs and long-ſuffering in the uſe of his *threatnings*; ſo

2. There

2. There be various cauſes which do hinder the converting effects of his Power, manifeſted in the *execution of Judgments*: ſo that they leave no more impreſſion on the hearts of men, than Arrows do of their paths in the air; their preſence may cauſe ſome diſturbance, but leave no laſting alteration: For

1. Some men elude the *convictions* which Judgments bring along with them, by a kind of *Scepticiſm*; *doubting* and *queſtioning* whether *publick calamities*, and common miſeries, come from God? or whether they be the production of natural cauſes, which in certain Periods of time have their conjunction? or the event of a fortuitous concurrence of malignant agents, free from the management of any ſuperiour, and deſigning Cauſe? Thus men affecting a repute of knowledge above the Vulgar, the eſteem of *Speculativi* in ſearching all the reſſorts of nature to trace the effect, and abhorring any reſolutions into Providence as the *Sanctuary* for *ignorance*, and *confeſſion* of it; they firſt *doubt*, and afterwards (their Luſts precipitating

the determination, and inclining the ballance where they may have leaſt check,) *deny*, that God was at all concerned in our miſeries. And therefore if it were not he that ſmote us, why ſhould we turn unto him? Why ſhould we forſake a beloved ſin, to ſeek a Lord, who doth neither good, nor evil? Whereas God *owns* the works of *natural* cauſes, as well as thoſe whoſe *ſpeed* and *greatneſs* diſcover his immediate hand. The Plague of *Locuſts* was confeſſed to be as much an effect of his indignation on *Egypt*, as any of the other prodigious Puniſhments; for they deſired *Moſes* to intercede for their removal: yet it is ſaid, that an *Eaſt wind* brought them, and a *Weſt wind* carried them away. But when God *hides* himſelf behind a traverſe of immediate Inſtruments, and *wraps* up his all-diſpoſing hand in a cloud; when, as the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *Clouds and darkneſs are round about him*; we ſeldom conſider the *Righteouſneſs and Judgment*, which are *the habitation of his Throne*. Thus while God God ſuffered the Devil to rival him in

Exod. 10. 13, 19.

Pſal. 97. 2.

in power, ſo that the *Magicians* could vie wonders with the ſervants of the moſt High, *Pharaoh* concluded the Lord's hand was not in the Plagues; he diſcredited the *Credentials* of *Moſes*, which were his *Miracles*, as the iſſues of ſome common art, and rejected the *Embaſſie*; for it is ſaid, *That he turned and went into his houſe, neither did he ſet his heart to this alſo.* Exod. 7. 23.

2. Sometimes, though men *acknowledge the evil* which befalls them was the *Lords doing*, and through a cloud of tears behold the brightneſs of Gods power, yet they render Judgments ineffectual to their amendment, by aſſigning them *as vengeances for other mens ſins*, and *puniſhments* for the *abominations* of thoſe who differ from them; from whence they conclude, *Repentance* to be the duty of others, and there needs no *change* in themſelves. The ſeveral *parties* of men do in common miſeries, as *routed* Souldiers in a defeat: tranſfer the blame from themſelves, and lay the cauſe of an overthrow upon anothers ſhoulders. How often have ye heard every

every one of thoſe Judgments which have faln upon this Land, by men of *different* Parties charged upon the ſins of their *contrary* Faction? *This* ſide thinks the *Rebellion* of the other, and the innocent bloud they have ſhed, *did cry* ſo loud for vengeance, that the Almighty could not reſt till he aroſe to *avenge it on the Inhabitants of the earth.* *That* ſide imagines, the *Luxury*, *profaneneſs*, and *impieties* of their Oppoſites to wearie the patience of God, till he take away our comforts, and ſtrip us of all our glories. One *Sect* believes, that all the ſad Providences under which we groan, are but the inſeparable concomitants of a *war* which God now wages againſt *Antichriſt*, whom they think is to be ſeated among thoſe who are diſſenters from them. The *other* is as firmly perſwaded, that the *Schiſms*, *Hæreſies*, *Blaſphemies* of the Holy Spirit; the *neglect of Publick worſhip*, the *malicious*, and *deſigned Diſbedience* to lawful Magiſtrates, the *Uncharitableneſs* and *Envy* of their fellow Subjects, which the others are infamous with, have juſtly provoked

provoked the *God* of *pure eyes* to make his anger ſmoak againſt ſuch an *infatuated* and *perverſe* Generation as this is. Thus every Party confines Gods love and hatred by their own meaſures, and are ſo far in love with what is theirs, that they think God *doats* upon their *Cauſe* as much as they do themſelves: and therefore ſuppoſe he calls *others* only to *return*; their buſineſs is to *ſtand ſtill*. Whereas all and every *Party*, yea, the *beſt* of men, have ſins enough to juſtifie Gods greateſt ſeverity: his indignation calls for all our tears, and his Judgments make no difference. In the *Peſtilence* we ſaw the ſame *pit* devour the ſpotted Carkaſſes, that had before ranged themſelves under contrary Perſwaſions; nor was the deſtroying Angel more tender of one Congregation than another. The *late Fire* preyed upon the ſtock and dwellings of the *Orthodox*, and *Fanatick*; and the houſes of *private Meetings*, together with publick *Churches*, were mingled in the aſhes. And ſhould our provoked God give us over into our *Enemies* hands, they would

ſpare

ſpare no *Sect*, that had wherewithall to gratifie their luſt and rage. Therefore in ſuch *Common* Judgments we can never do our duty, till every one be affected as the conſcious *Prophet*, and take up his confeſſion, *I know that for my ſake this tempeſt*, this miſery, *is come upon you.* And could we be ſo happy to attain to a common repentance, and *walk by the ſame rule* in turning to the Lord, it would remove that other Judgment of our *Diviſions*, which is pregnant with many miſchiefs; for, the Apoſtle aſſures us, *Phil.*3. 15. *If in any thing elſe ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal this even unto you.*

Jon. 1. 12.

3. Some men by their very *deliverance* from a Judgment, through a *prodigious folly*, become impenitent after it: accuſtomed dangers harden the eſcaped *fool* oftentimes to a ſtupidity; the *rude*r Mariners, that have weathered out ſeveral ſtorms, will ſteal, blaſpheme, and be drunk in the next tempeſt. *Dion Caſſius* tells us, That *Catiline*, being accuſed for the murders, and rapines committed on thoſe whom *Sylla* had proſcribed,

proſcribed, and eſcaping the condemnation under which others fell for the ſame crimes, *did from this grow much worſe, and by this did at laſt periſh.* So we often ſee him that hath come off ſafe from one Judgment, *careleſs* to avoid another by the amendment of his life; eſpecially if he can any way fancie that he owes his deliverance to ſome *poor Art* of his own: for then he promiſes himſelf, that without the *auſterities* of Repentance, or making himſelf any longer a *burden* to Providence, the ſame Arts, or the like, ſhall be his conſtant refuge. And wicked men are alwaies confident in their own counſels. The Prophet charges the impenitencie of the ſcornful men of *Jeruſalem* upon the confidence of their own Arts, *Iſa.* 28.15. For they ſaid, *We have made a Covenant with Death, and with Hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing ſcourge ſhall paſs through, it ſhall not come nigh us,* &c. Beſides this, the proſpect of ſome *advantages* which a deliverance repreſents, takes off all thoughts of repenting in thoſe that are eſcaped, and

καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐκ τούτου χείρων τε πολὺ ἐγένετο, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἀπώλετο, Dio. Rom. Hiſt. l. 37.

employs them to gather up the *relicks* of anothers ruine, the *ſpoils* of a common *wrack*, to repair the breaches of their own fortunes, or encreaſe their eſtates. So that they conceive a publick Judgment to loſe its nature as to them, and that it was but a *kindneſs* of heaven to advance their private intereſt; and therefore they interpret thoſe loud *Calls* to repentance to ſignifie in their ſenſe, *invitations* to *eat, drink*, and be *merry*, becauſe they *have more goods laid up for them*. Thus the men of *Samaria turned not to him that ſmote them*, becauſe they ſaw an advantage ariſe from the blow: *For they ſaid in the pride and ſtoutneſs of their hearts, The bricks are faln down, but we will build with hewn ſtone; the Sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into Cedars.* By theſe, and ſeveral ſuch like follies, do many men transform their *deliverance* it ſelf to a greater Judgment, and make the ſaving of ſome temporal concernment, the occaſion of their ſpiritual ruine.

Iſa 9. 10.

Laſtly, *Corruptions* and *Luſts* having got ſtrength by *frequent* ſatisfactions, and

and by a conſtant practice arrived to *habits* of ſin, are not to be taken off by common and ordinary means; but are as the *Leproſie*, when got into the *walls*, that was not to be removed but by pulling down the whole *houſe*. The inſtances of *impoſſibilities* are uſed to expreſs the difficulty of reforming a *cuſtomary* ſinner; *Can the Æthiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots? Then may ye alſo do good that are accuſtomed to do evil.* It is a miracle of Mercy, and an extraordinary triumph of Grace, if ever an *habitual* ſinner be changed or altered. For ſin, by wilful and habitual enterpriſes, having gotten dominion, makes the ſoul of man *naturally uncapable* of the means of Repentance. The Scripture tells us, what ſtrange monſters men become by *conſtant* practiſes of Iniquity: Their *heart* is as *an Adamant*, and exceeds the hardneſs of rocks; their *foreheads* are as *braſs*, that cannot bluſh at the reproaches of any wickedneſs. The Hiſtorian obſerves, of thoſe that are grown to the height of impiety, *Noviſſima voluptas eſt infamia*; *Infamy*

Lev. 14. 45.

Jer. 13. 23.

Zech. 7. 12.

Jer. 6. 28.

Tac. An. l. 11.

is their laſt pleaſure; their *underſtanding*, which is naturally impaired by frequent acts of ſin, is debaſed to the narrowneſs of ſenſe; and therefore to the moſt ſtupid Creatures doth the Holy Ghoſt compare them, as to the *Oxe*, the *Aſſe*, the *wild-Aſſes Colt*, the *deaf Adder*, the *ſilly Dove*, and the *wandring Sheep*; and the advantage lies on the ſide of the *beaſt*. In this condition they will blindly charge through a legion of *deſtroying* Angels to come to their ſinful enjoyments, and to attain their wicked hopes. In ſuch perſons, all the gracious methods to repentance are diſappointed: For the Prophet obſerves, *Iſa.*26.10. that *Let favour be ſhewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteouſneſs*: So that goodneſs prevails not; nor is wrath more ſucceſful, for it is added, *Ver.*11. *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee*: All Corrections and Chaſtiſements beſtowed upon theſe, are like blows ſpent upon *wilde* beaſts, which do rather more enrage, than tame them.

Iſa.1.3.
Job 11.12.
Pſal.58.4.
Hoſ.7.11.

Theſe are the dreadful cauſes which make

make good the *ſuppoſition* in the Text, that bring the poſſibility into an actual being; and therefore require all our *induſtry* and caution to avoid them, leſt they betray us to the ſadneſs of the inevitable *conſequence*: Which is next to be conſidered, it being

The ſecond part of the Text; *Then will I puniſh you ſeven times more for your ſins.* Wherein the Conſequent, which is *Puniſhment*, and the neceſſity of the Conſequence, *I will puniſh*, do *firſt* require your contemplations.

1. That *puniſhment* ſhould follow *ſin*, there ſeems to be a *neceſſity of nature*: For, were ſin rightly conſidered, and did it appear as hateful in our eyes, as it is in the *eyes* of *God*, and *good* men: we ſhould ſee ſo much miſery in it ſelf, ſeparated from the horrid train of its effects and merits, that we ſhould deem it torment enough to *ſatisfie* any revengeful Adverſary without the ſuperadditions of his fierce anger. Men reckon for puniſhments, not only the loſs of *Life*, or *Limb*, or *Eſtate*; but put into the Catalogue, a *forfeiture of priviledges*,

priviledges, the *degrading* from *honours*, and the *impoſition* of baſe and ſervile *offices*. All this is Sin in it ſelf, for it is a *renouncing* of all our rights to the Divine *Goodneſs*, a *laying aſide* our robes of righteouſnes, a *ſtripping* and making our ſelves naked of innocency, which is the glory and honour of the Creature; and it is alſo a *drudging*, and ſervice, of the ſoul to the carnal appetite, which was appointed to be her ſlave. This ſeems to be ſo accounted by God, for he is ſaid *to hide his face* from the ſinner; which though it admit many other ſenſes, yet may be alſo true in this, that he doth as a *Father*, who is unwilling to ſee his *child* carried about as a publick ſhame, or behold him panting upon a Wrack. And *pious* men apprehend it no otherwiſe: for the tranſgreſſion exacts more tears and groans from them, than the terrours of a purſuing anger. There is indeed a *different reſpect* betwixt ſin, and puniſhment as commonly apprehended, becauſe *that* is our own choice, when *this* is accounted the effect of

anothers

anothers diſpleaſure; yet the event, *diminutio capitis*, a *real loſs*, is the ſame in both: which in one comes forth by way of emanation, in the other waits the formality of a *Judge* and *Sentence*. But this may be thought a notion too nice for our groſſer apprehenſions; and indeed, God's Juſtice is not *ſatisfied* in it, as not fully anſwering his ends in puniſhing: For it is not enough for the *correction* of the ſinner, who by his ſin being grown more ſenſual, muſt be afflicted there where he is moſt delighted: Nor is it enough for the *terrour* of others, who cannot ſurvey and be warned by our ſpiritual loſſes. Therefore he hath eſtabliſhed between them a

2*d*. Conſequence, as from *a neceſſary cauſe* to the effect, all the effects of ſin being afflicting and conſuming. *For wickedneſs burneth as the fire, it devours the briars and thorns.* Iniquity *preys* upon the Tranſgreſſour, if it be let alone, till it hath conſumed him. For every ſin doth in its way and meaſure either waſte the *body*, fill it with Iſa. 9. 18.

diſeaſes;

diseases; abate its strength, shorten its day, obstruct its lawful delights, and keep off the solid comforts of life: or it impairs the *reasonable* Faculties, weakens the *Understanding*, confines it to poor and low cares; limits, and restrains the *Will*, cloggs it in its brave essaies, pinions it as to noble flights: discomposes the *passions* with sad apprehensions, or frolicks of madness. Or else it plainly wastes his *Estate*, brings the sinner himself from a plentiful Table *to a morsel of bread*, and sends his Children to *seek their meat in desolate places*. Or else it corrupts his *Fame*, makes his Memory an execration, and his Name an astonishment. These are real punishments, which thus afflict the Transgressour, and raise an horrour in those that are about him: God having put a kind of *Nemesis*, a vindicative Justice in the course of things, and *chained* Sin and Punishment together, as the *Romans* did their Malefactors to the Souldiers that were to be the Keepers or Executioners. But this is not all: for there is a

3. Necessity

3. Neceſſity of the Conſequence, which is that of *Juſtice* to the *Merit*: From ſin immediately flows *guilt*, which is *an obligation to puniſhment* anſwerable unto it; and the execution of it depends not upon the bare *efficacy* of ſin, but upon the *Rectitude* of ſome Cauſe without, who, as a *Judge* or *Prince*, orders and diſpoſes thoſe things which are apt to afflict or deſtroy the Offender. So God, the Great Judge, and *King of all the earth*, doth in juſtice proſecute the Offenders, uſing and diſpoſing the other Creatures for the execution of his anger: Sometimes he makes the *Air* upon its wings to convey infection and rottenneſs into our inward parts, as in the Peſtilence; ſometimes he cauſes the *Fire* to kindle upon our houſes, and a *Flame* to waſte our ill-gotten ſtores. Another time he calls the *Beaſts* of the field, to come and devour: Or he alarms the Nations to *war*, bids one people beſiege another; *to ſcoff at Kings and Princes: to deride every ſtrong Hold*, and take them: Or, he admits the accuſation of the great Hab. 1. 10.

Adverſary of mankind, and ſuffers that
2 Tim. 2. 26. greedy Executioner to lead the guilty *captive*. Theſe, and ſeveral other waies hath this Great Judge, to trace out ſin with puniſhment; and he uſes each of them in their *ſeaſons*, as his wiſdom thinks fitteſt, to *convince* the wicked, *point* out the ſin, and *declare* the Glory of the Judge. His puniſhments are alwaies certain on the impenitent, though it be not certain to us what way he will execute them.

Therefore thoſe frequent *complaints* and *ſcandals* which men take at *Providence*, as if not careful enough in obſerving this conſequence betwixt ſin and puniſhment, becauſe they ſometimes ſee
Pſal. 73. 5. *the wicked proſper*, (as they imagine) *and to come into no misfortune, nor to be plagued as other men*, are falſe and vain, and ariſe from our own *weakneſs*, and *impatience*.

For firſt; It is a *vulgar errour*, to think that *there is no puniſhment but what is obvious to our ſenſes*, ſo that unleſs we ſee the ſinner cloathed with ſhame, ruined in his eſtate, or cut off from the face of

the

the earth; men murmur, and will queſtion, *whether God knows*, and doubt *whether there be knowledge in the Moſt High*? For we do not ſee, or elſe take no notice of, the continual decaies in the *body* of the ſinner, the daily waſting of his *ſoul*, the declining of his *reaſon* more and more to brutiſhneſs and ſenſuality; we cannot behold the *cares* and *anxieties* that do afflict his *ſpirit*, diſquiet and continually turmoyl his inward man; we ſee not when God gives him over to a *reprobate mind*, and to *vile affections*; when he leaves him in the *hardneſs* of his own heart, by which he doth as it were ſhut him up in priſon till he be brought forth to entertain the World with his publick Execution: and yet theſe are as *real*, yea, more *dreadful* puniſhments, than loſs of Life, and Fortune, and all; though not ſo viſible, yet more *inſupportable*. Pſal. 73. 11. Rom. 1. 26, 28.

Secondly, It is another *Miſtake*, when men think *Outward proſperity to be inconſiſtent with God's puniſhments*. For even in the greateſt *wealth*, and the ſupreameſt *fortune*, all the *vindicative*

effects of sin may be in their Execution: for, besides those less visible punishments, the very *crimes*, and *lusts* themselves turn into a *punishment*; while they contend one with the other which shall have the speediest *satisfaction*, and every one strives against the natural checks of the light of Reason, (which often makes them *boggle* and start at the *Commission*; *varie* and alter the designed *times* of execution; *neglect* the *present*, and torment them with thousands of fears in expecting a *future* opportunity;) the mind is so torn and distracted: that *Plato* concludes, If their *breasts* were transparent, we should see such *laniatus*, & *ictus*, such *galls* and *gashes* upon their *minds*, as rods of iron, and scourges of steel make upon the mangled bodies of some condemned Wretches. And *Tacitus* makes *Tiberius* an instance of this: who in spight of his fortune, his guards, and beastly divertisements at *Capreæ*; could not but confess in his Letter to the Senate, *Tormenta pectoris, suasque pœnas*, &c. the tortures and punishments his soul endured, to be such as he thought *the Gods*,

Pla. l. 9. de Rep. Ἐάν τις ὅλην ψυχὴν ἐπίστηται θεάσασθαι, καὶ φόβου γέμων διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου σφαδασμῶντε καὶ ὠδυνῶν πληρὴς φαίνεται.

Tac. An. 6.

Gods could not inflict greater. Thus *Nero* alſo, for all his *fidling*, *ſinging*, and *rioting* through many the chiefeſt *Cities* of the Empire, had yet the *conſcience* of his impieties, to interrupt his pleaſures, which made him tremble in the Temples, as if the *Gods* did appear, like revengeful *Furies*, to his conſcious ſpirit; or, *facinorum recordatione nunquam timore vacuus*, *the memory of his crimes appaling him with continual fears.* Theſe, and many other Inſtances, which Hiſtorians have obſerved, ſhew: No *outward* condition *ſecures* the offender, or *reprieves* him from the deſerved puniſhments.

Diime deæque pejus perdunt, quàm perire quotidie ſentio.

Tac. An. 14.

Laſtly, We might obſerve, that *God traces ſins even with outward puniſhment*; were it not for our own *impatience*, which ariſes rather from a too nice *ſenſe* of the *injuries* we ſuffer, & from an *envie* at *the wickeds proſperity*, than from any neglect that God can be charged with. We would have *fire come down* preſently *from Heaven*, a *thunderbolt* immediately hurled, and an *Angel* with all ſpeed diſpatched to remove the loathed *ſinner* from our troubled

troubled *ſight*: and permit not that *leaſure*, and thoſe *ſeaſons* which the Divine *wiſdom* of our Judge thinks fit to chooſe. Whereas if we did in *patience* poſſeſs our ſouls, curb and depreſs their violent and inconſiderate motions; we might perceive, even to a ſatisfaction, how God ſeldom, or never lets an infamous *offender* go off from the *ſtage* of this world, without ſome evident marks of his Indignation; either in his own *Perſon*, or thoſe of his *Family*. For ſometime God cuts *him* off in ſuch a *way* and *manner*; in ſuch a *time*, and *place*; in his *Arts*, and by his own *wickedneſs*, while he *riots* in his crime, or before he gathers the expected *fruit* of his impious deſigns; that men may plainly conclude, that *the Lord's hand* was in his ruine. Or, though the fire of Gods anger burn not clearly out in *his life*-time, or at his *death*: yet it may flame brightly on his *children*; and his poſterity, with the inheritance of his *criminal gains*, may have that of his *puniſhments*. And this may be *his puniſhment*, as being within his *proſpect*: for before the darkneſs of death

ſeal

ſeal up his eyes, he may ſee the train laid that will blow up his *houſe*; the follies, vanities, and luſts of ſome *heir*, or curſed *off-ſpring*, that will waſte all he hath gathered, and bury his *name* and memory in the ruines of his houſe. Therefore God ſeems to limit his anger on the *poſterity* of the wicked to *the third or fourth Generation*, becauſe their miſeries may be within the *fore-ſight* of the ſinner, and have the ſame men *witneſſes* of the *inflictions*, that were of the *offences*. The ſad apprehenſions of which, joyned with the awakened fears of an approaching Judgment at the Throne of Chriſt, may make his *end* as comfortleſs as all the fury of men can render the *execution* of a Malefactor. And theſe *waies* of Providence juſtifie the *Righteouſneſs* of God in obſerving the conſequence betwixt ſin and puniſhment. Add to this, Exod. 20. 5.

2. The terrour of the Conſequence, *I will puniſh you ſeven times more*. This expreſſion is ſo large, that it *alarms* all our fears, *comprehends* all that we deſerve, and whatſoever an Almighty

wrath

wrath can inflict. For God by this doth not bound himself to *definite* degrees of punishing; because when we by an obstinate continuance in sin, in despite of all his methods to repentance, have forfeited all our *rights* to the *Goodness* of God, it must be only his *pleasure*, and our *capacity* of suffering, that must give measure to his punishment; therefore this *seven times more* may signifie,

1. *Greater* and *more* punishments than those formerly inflicted: for when past Judgments have left us *mad* upon our sins, his *Wisdom* may bring some *new*, fuller of terrour, and more pregnant with destruction, to bring us *to our wits again*. Or his *Justice* may multiply our Miseries to a proportion with our Iniquities, which are encreased by our *unprofitableness* under foregoing corrections. Besides, our *case* requires it; for every affliction that hath passed over us without any effects to amendment, have made our hearts *harder*: therefore if he intend us any good, he must multiply, and aggrandize his *Strokes*. So that whereas God before did whip us with

rods,

Rods, now he muſt do it with *Scorpions*: he may adde *fears* within to the *terrours* without; if before, his puniſhments came *ſingly*, now he may amaſs them into *troups*, and *bands*; bring *Deſolation*, *Poverty*, *Peſtilence*, a *War* within, and *War* without, all at once.

2. Puniſhments of another *kind*, and to other *purpoſes*: That whereas at firſt he did *chaſtiſe*, and *correct* to amendment; now he may make us an *Example*, and *Terrour* round about. In his *corrections* he may retain his *love*, his *chaſtiſements* are reconcileable with his *fatherly kindneſs*. But he deals with us as an *Enemy*, brings us *into Judgment with him*, when he pleads with us before men; puts us to an open ſhame, and diſcovers our *nakedneſs* in ſight of all that go by the way; makes us an aſtoniſhment to them that ſee us; ſo that they *wag their heads*, and ſay, *Theſe are the Men that took not God for their guide*; This is the People *that forſook God their Saviour*; *This is the fooliſh Nation, and unwiſe, that did evilly requite the Lord that bought them, and*

thus ſhall it be done to all them that forget God.

3. Puniſhments to *Exciſion*; his making both a *full end* of us, and of puniſhing us. When he is weary of correcting, and ſhaming us, and weary of *his own repentings*, as he was of thoſe, *Iſa.*1.5. *Why ſhould ye be ſtricken any more, ye will revolt more and more?* When he is tired out in his waitings for fruit from barren ſouls, then *he cuts them off*, and will not ſuffer them any longer *to cumber the ground*; then he will cut us off from being a people, and *our name ſhall no more be had in remembrance, nor ſhall we be reckoned among the Nations.*

Luk.13.

4. Puniſhments to *Vengeance*; when he caſts the ſinners into *Hell*, and there makes their pains and ſorrows as laſting as their ſins would have been, had they continued to Eternitie. This is a farther *degree* of puniſhment than the former; for God may cut off many, as to *this life*, for their tranſgreſſions, and yet bound his wrath in the *Grave*, and not purſue them with Puniſhments in the

ſtate of the dead. St. *Paul* ſaith, many of the *Corinthians*, for the unworthy receiving of the *Sacrament*, *were ſick and weak, and fell aſleep*, that is, *died*: but yet, that is too ſoft an expreſſion to ſignifie their *being damned*: for in the language of Scripture, the *taking away of merciful men, from the evil to come, and the death of thoſe that walk in their uprightneſs*, is called, *their reſt in their beds*. But when men have *oppoſed*, and obſtinately endeavoured to diſappoint God in his end of Judgments by impenitencie, we may with reaſon think they *ſhall be turned into Hell*; for that is ſtiled, the *Congregation of Giants*: and that you know is the Title of notorious *fighters* againſt God. Thus all theſe Puniſhments are comprehended under that number of *ſeven times more*: and therefore render the Conſequence exceeding terrible. Which yet is but *juſt*; For,

1 Cor. 11. 30.

Iſa. 57. 1, 2.

Pro. 21. 16. בקהל רפאים

3. The *Juſtice* of the Conſequence is in thoſe words which are as a reaſon of the encreaſed puniſhments: *I will puniſh you*, &c. *For your ſins*; that is, *becauſe you have deſerved them*. For the

horrour of any punishments inflicted by God, argues the Offence proportionably haynous: there being so great an *Equity* in all the Judgments of God, that they never *exceed*, but for the most part are *beneath* the transgression. So that if God so severely punish our not amending after Judgments, it is because that *Impenitencie* is a most horrid *provocation*; and such in truth it is, being a *contempt* and *despight* of all his Gracious and Glorious *Attributes*. For,

1. His *Wisdom* is slighted, and an affront is put upon his infinite Understanding, which did *invent* the Consequence betwixt Sin and Punishment; to *turn* men from the vanity of their waies, that they might be *advised* not to doat upon evil, which draws after it such an inseparable throng of miseries. But he that hath both *tasted* sin, and *felt* punishment, and yet thinks the *first* worthy the hazard of the *latter*, and that one is a cheap purchase for the other; *reproaches* the Divine Knowledge of having not sufficiently provided.

vided for the attainment of his end.

2. The *goodneſs* of God is turned off with *ſcorn*: for if he hath only afflicted us, ſo that we *live*; it is clear, that he reſerved us for his *ſervice*, and the embraces of his love; becauſe, had he reſolved no more to accept of our worſhip, he would have ſhut us up in the *pit*, *where there is no remembrance of him*, and cloſed us in the *grave*, *where none do give him thanks*: but if he let us *live*, it is clear he intended that *we ſhould praiſe his Name*, and upon that to ſhew us his *Salvation*. But if he that was afflicted, yet not deſtroyed; terrified, yet not broken in pieces; ſhall have *no new ſongs in his mouth*, nor will *order his converſation aright* to pleaſe him who pulled his feet out of the mire, and ſet him upon a rock; ſuch a man doth rudely *ſcorn* the kindneſs by which he was ſaved, and rejects the courtſhip to a more endearing love. Pſal. 6. 5.

3. The *Power* of God is undervalued, and his *Omnipotencie* braved. For, he that hath eſcaped one *ſtroke* of God, and yet will not amend upon it, but ſtill

affronts,

affronts him to his face, muſt be concluded to think; God hath *waſted* all his Thunderbolts, *emptied* his Quiver, and *broke* his Sword in the paſt encounter; and become like thoſe poor Animals, who loſe their ſting in the firſt wound they give. The routed *Syrians* had not renewed their Invaſion of *Iſrael*, had they thought the God of *Jacob* could triumph in the *Valleys*, as glorioufly as upon the *Hills*, and had ſtrength enough for a freſher *victory*: This vile eſteem of God thruſt their infatuated *Prince* upon another overthrow. The ſame thoughts, if not *formally*, yet *virtually*, thoſe men have of God, who having hardly come off from one Judgment, yet do by *repeating* their ſins, ſeem to *challenge* him to another. For did we *ſeriouſly think*, that that God, who at firſt did but *lightly* afflict, could plague us *ſeven times more*; that he which brought the *Peſtilence* upon our nation, could ſpread our own perſons over with Spots and Tokens; that he, who by a *Flame* conſumed our goods, and houſes, could turn our *bodies* into aſhes, and after that caſt

1 King. 20. 23.

our

our *ſouls* into Hell-fire; that he, who hath brought our enemies out to the *battel*, conld give us up as a *prey* to their *fury*; that he, who hath gathered Forrain Nations againſt us, could alſo turn the *ſwords* of every man into the *heart* of his *neighbour*, and appoint each one as a ſlaughter-man of his *brother*; did we but conſider what Judgments can be brought upon us by an Almighty Arm: we ſhould certainly follow the *Counſels* of his firſt *Providences*; be aſhamed that our Father hath *ſpit* in our faces, and not weary him till he *ſmite* them with a *Leproſie*, or make the earth open to *ſwallow* us up. We ſhould *humble* our ſelves more in the appehenſions of what might befal us, than be troubled, or *murmur* for what we already ſuffer, leſt God puniſh us *ſeven times more for our ſins*.

The *Text* being thus conſidered; the *Application* of it will ſhew us what we are to think of our *preſent* and *future condition*. For *Our caſe* is the ſame with theirs in the *Suppoſition*: as if we alſo had been the very People God had in his

his prospect when he spake this Text. We of *this Generation* have been *a people of wrath*, and seem to have been born to be as *Fewel* for Judgments; or to have been called from the *Womb*, and summoned from the *lower parts of the earth*, to come forth and behold *what desolations God can bring upon a Land, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* For those plagues and miseries which did use to be *divided* among several Ages, and to come *singly*, and in *certain Periods* of time; have all fallen upon *us*, with as much speed as that of hastie Messengers, one treading upon the heels of another; that we have had scarce time to survey the *wastes* which one hath made, ere another came to call for our *tears* and *wonder.* Let us *sit down* upon our *Ruines*, and recount them if we can. We have seen a tedious *Civil War*, with all the innumerable Series of its *miseries*, and of its *sins*, bringing *Poverty*, and *Desolation*, upon the far greatest part of the Kingdom; defiling most men with *innocent blood*, introducing *Schisms*, *Hæresies*, *Blasphemies*,

mies, and *Atheiſm*; tempting men to *perjuries*, and the practice of moſt *damnable Arts*; which iniquities ought to fill us with more ſorrows, than our outward miſeries did.

When this was ended by a *Mercy* above our merits, and too great for our hopes, in the reſtoring of our lawful *Prince*, and our ancient *Rights*, and yet neither our late unhappineſſes, nor preſent bleſſings, did prevail to repentance; but God had waited *three years*, *ſeeking the fruits* of his Providences, *and finding none*, yea, had granted *one year* more to the *interceſſion* of his own *Goodneſs*; then came upon us a ***Forrain War***. Wherein, though we have hitherto no reaſon to complain of a want of mercy; becauſe he hath crowned our juſt battels with *ſucceſs*: yet ſtill that which *coſts* ſo much Bloud, and Treaſure, muſt be accounted a Judgment; & it is no little miſery to be *neceſſitated* by Arms to maintain our *own rights*.

While we were thus buſied with *cares* againſt men, God ſurpriſes us with new *fears* from himſelf, and brings ſuch a *Plague* upon us, that

neither we, nor our Fathers, nor their Fore-fathers, for many Generations, had ever known the like.

Ere the *deſtroying Angel* had finiſhed his work here, and while he was raging in many other places of the Nation, a *mercileſs Fire* & *devouring flame*, came upon our chief *City*, the *Queen of our Provinces*, which conſumed the *prices* of many years labours, and thoſe publick *Ornaments* which had out-laſted the injuries of many hundred *Ages*, in the ſpace of far leſs *hours*. The ſad Conſequences of which, are yet not known, as if clouded in its own ſmoake: but we may conceive that as burning *Mountains* ſcatter their aſhes, and ſpread a deſolation and barrenneſs over the neighbouring *Plains* and *Fields*; ſo this burning *City*, may overſpread the leſſer Towns and Villages with *want* of *Trade*, and *Poverty*; and caſt forth ſomething of her ruines upon the whole Nation. But, notwithſtanding *this is come upon us*, which I conceive are greater puniſhments than the *Text* ſuppoſes, yet the other part of the Suppoſition is alſo too true of us; For,

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We have not yet for all this hearkened unto the Lord, Alas! this is too poor an Expreſſion for us to ſay, *We have not hearkened*, for *we have revolted more and more*; we are ſo far from *forſaking* our ſins, that we have *encreaſed* them; made it our buſineſs to out-vie Judgments with our Tranſgreſſions; as if Puniſhments were *Inſtructions* to impiety, and it is too evident they have been uſed as *opportunities* for greater Crimes. I am aſhamed to rehearſe them, they are ſo *bruitiſh* and abominable; beſides, their *number* exceeds, as well as their *foulneſs* affrights the memory: and indeed there is no need to repreſent them; for our Iniquities are not only *marked before the Lord*, but they are alſo, as written with a beam of the Sun, ſo plain, that *he who runs may read them.*

Thus therefore when our *Caſe* is wholly the ſame with the *Suppoſition*, what remains for us, but a *fearful looking for, and expectation of, God's more fiery Indignation*, that on us alſo the Conſequence ſhould be fulfilled, and that God ſhould *puniſh us ſeven times*

more; that he ſhould bring upon us *greater*, and other *ſorts* of Puniſhments. He hath already puniſhed us to *Correction*, and we have not amended: Nay, we are not confounded, though he hath puniſhed us to a *terrour* and *example*; for he hath *called Heaven and Earth to witneſs*; he hath cited all the Nations, that know us, in the world, to *Judge betwixt him and us*: for he hath pleaded againſt us in his Judgments, diſcovering our nakedneſs, and putting us to an open ſhame. For all the world knows, that *the righteous Judge will not deal unjuſtly*: and therefore in that he hath brought upon us ſo great *deſtructions*, it is certain we had greater *abominations*; for where Judgments are engraven, on the reverſe Iniquities are inſcribed; there needs no more to declare the guilt of *Sodom*, than to tell the *Travellers* as they go along, *There once was a City where there now is a pitchie Lake*. And when the *Marriners* and *Ship-Maſters* ſhall ſaile by our *Shores*, and ſay, *How is the Joyous City become a deſolation?* They will ſoon

ſubjoyn,

ſubjoyn, *How was the faithful City become an harlot, and unrighteouſneſs lodged in her?* Therefore God hath already puniſhed us to an *Example*, and there remains only now that he ſhould puniſh us to *Exciſion* and *Vengeance*, which himſelf only knows, *how ſoon* may come upon us, and by *what waies* his wiſdom will proceed to execution: we our ſelves may gueſs by our ſins and terrours that it is not far off.

I tremble to think, that he may make our proud and cruel *Enemies* to land upon our Coaſts, who ſhall *ſport* with our bloud, and make our labours the miniſteries to their luſts: who may drive us to ſeek the mercy of leſs barbarous *Indians*, and leave the Land of our Fathers to their ſatisfaction. Or, he may cut off *us*, and this good *Land* together, withdraw the Foundation of this (as Hiſtories tells us, he hath done of other) *Iſland*, and let it ſink from the *arms* to the *bottom* of the Sea. Or, he may by ſome unheard-of way, *turn this* whole *Nation into Hell*, that have ſo long forgotten God. Theſe are the horrours of that

Conſe-

Conſequence, which we *deſerve* ſhould ſeize on us; and which *certainly* will, unleſs we labour to prevent them.

But how can that be? Can it be by a *continuance*, and *encreaſe* of ſin? If ſo, let us go on then, and let us encreaſe our confidence; Let the *Sons* of *Impiety* invent ſome *new* ſin that may ſurprize the fore-ſight of Eternity; let them find out ſome *bold*, and *brave* tranſgreſſion that will ſecure men from Omnipotencie, and *terrifie* God himſelf from his own wrath. But alas! how can *the pot-ſheards of the earth ſtrive with their Maker*? How can the *ſmall duſt of the ballance* contend with him that *ſitteth on the Circle of the heavens*? *Who ever hardened himſelf againſt the Lord and proſpered*?

If then it cannot be done this way, can we do it by *breaking off our ſins* by repentance, and humbling our ſelves before the Smiter? Yes, this will do it: For, the *amendment* of our lives is able to reſcue us from our *preſent* miſeries, and preſerve us from the evil that is yet *to come*. Such a *change* in man works another in God; turns all his

his *frowns* into *ſmiles*; makes his *Fury* againſt, to become *Zeal* for, us; alters the *thunder* of his threatnings, to the *ſounding of his bowels*; and his *compaſſions* and *repentings* will be *kindled in him* inſtead of kindling the *fire* of his *Jealouſie*; ſo that this will prevent that Ruine which we ſee gathering about us.

But then the *difficulty* returns, How ſhall this repentance be wrought, if the Judgments of God will not do it? For, though we may believe, many *private perſons* mourn in ſecret for the ſins, and miſeries of the Nation, yet this is not enough; becauſe, *publick ſins* muſt have a *publick repentance*; beſides, God may take away theſe *merciful men from the evil to come*; and then by whom muſt we look for a common deliverance? When there are ſo many *Atheiſts* and *Hypocrites*, ſo many *fools* and half-witted *Scepticks*, ſo many *factious* and *voluptuous* perſons, as make up the greater bulk of this Nation; who all think there is *no need* of repentance, or are reſolved not to do it themſelves: what hopes can we have of a publick amend-

amendment? There remains nothing *visible* for our comforts but this, The *Example*, and *Industry* of those in *Power* to take away all *publick abominations*; this under God is our only ground for hope, and this by his assistance will perform it, (unless our *Iniquities come to the full*, ere they apply themselves to the work:) For *Government* is the soul of *Society*, and Magistrates in Church and State are as the upper soul and *Intellectual* faculties to guide the whole to safety, and honour: if these therefore be once set right in a way that is good, I cannot say, They shall have *all*; but am sure, they shall have *many followers*, and the tears of repentance will bedew the publick face of the Nation.

This I humbly conceive to be, in some measure, the duty of the *Honourable part* of this *Assembly*, who have their share in Government. It lies upon you, within the just limits of your power, to do that Right to *God*, to this your *Country*, and to your own *Honour*, which are justly expected from you. For, if the

the Publick be *guilty*, You cannot be thought *innocent*: if we be *miſerable*, You cannot be *happy*. Let it not be ſaid in following Generations, (if there ſhall be any after this,) *That You ſate in Council, and the whole Nation committed folly.* Let not *Poſterity* ſay, and future *Hiſtorians* write, *Theſe men were concerned in the Publick Juſtice, and yet Impiety was ſo high, that God brought ſuch and ſuch diſmal Plagues upon the Kingdom.* Publick *miſeries* are taken as *reproaches* of thoſe who are in *power* to prevent publick *Sins*. You have exceeded all *examples* in your proviſions for the *Honour* of your King, and our ſafety from a *Forrain* Enemy: Let that move you now to exceed Your ſelves, do ſomething alſo for the honour of *God*, and the advancement of *Righteouſneſs*. You have comforted the hearts of the People by your Zeal againſt the *Old Adverſaries* of our Faith; let the ſame be exerted againſt *all*. Give ſome *Reverence* to *Religion*; that if wicked men will not *love* it, yet they may not dare

to *deſpiſe* it; that, if their hearts will not *renounce* their luſts, yet let it not be ſafe to *act* them in the face of the Sun. Give ſome *power* and force to *Holineſs*; make ſome brave Attempts, in ſpight of the *Corruptions* of our Age, to reſtore ſomewhat of the *Diſcipline* of *Chriſtianity*, that Wickedneſs may be cloathed with ſhame, and be the aſtoniſhment of a City and Nation. Conſult the *Honour* of your own *Aſſembly*, and let your Lives and Examples be as Sacred as your Laws: that men may *praiſe* them, and not dare to *violate* theſe. If God ſhall be pleaſed by your means to bring this great, yet miſerable, *People*, to repentance; and to ſave them from the *depth* of miſery, on whoſe *brink* both You and We do all now ſtand: How will all Generations *call you bleſſed*! Your *Memories* will outlaſt Monuments of Braſs and Marble. God will make you *rejoyce with his Inheritance*, and your Seed ſhall poſſeſs the Land, in the fruition of all thoſe comforts wherewith he ſatiates righteous Hearts,

Hearts, & crowns wiſe Heads; For which, may his infinite mercie fit you and us, through the merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

To *whom, with the Father, and the Eternal Spirit, be given all obedience, and aſcribed all Honour and Glory both now and for evermore.* Amen.

FINIS.